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C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 002240

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/CACEN, EUR/ACE, PLEASE PASS USAID

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/29/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: GOAM AGAIN DENIES CASES OF AVIAN FLU IN RESPONSE  
TO REPORTS OF A-I IN EASTERN TURKEY

REF: YEREVAN 2053

Classified by Charge d'Affaires A.F.Godfrey for reasons 1.4  
(b,d).

(C) Responding to press reports that the Turkish Agricultural Ministry had linked cases of infected birds in Turkey to migration from Armenia, Armenia's Deputy Minister of Agriculture Levon Rukhkyan told the press December 29 that there had been no confirmed cases of birds infected with avian influenza (AI) in Armenia. Rukhyan's statement repeated official GOAM denials of any cases of AI in the country (ref) but went farther than earlier statements in pointing to the GOAM's preventative measures. Rukhyan's office told us November 30 that they were concerned about reports that hundreds of infected birds had been identified in Turkey but told us that "everything was under control as far as Armenia is concerned." Comment: The tone and timing of Rukhyan's public and private statements show that the GOAM still appreciates the policy implications of AI. Government commitment in terms of resource allocation, however, is still unclear. We will continue to look for concrete proof of the GOAM's efforts to combat the problem -- beyond coordination with local embassies and international organizations -- as information about the situation in Turkey continues to filter into Yerevan.  
GODFREY